MOUNT GERIZIM

The One True Sanctuary

By JACOB, SON OF AARON
HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS

TRANSLATED BY ABDULLAH BEN KORI
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EDITED BY
WILLIAM E. BARTON, D.D.

CONCERNING SAMARITAN MANUSCRIPTS.

The Samaritan priests, appreciating the interest of American and European Christians, are now willing to sell to them accurate modern copies of the ancient books of the Samaritan religion. I think it well, however, to warn intending purchasers, that not all the copies offered for sale, even in Nâblus, are accurate. Some people of little learning, relying on the ignorance of tourists, have made garbled copies of our Torah, and sold them to tourists or correspondents. Manuscripts purchased at our Synagogue, from myself or my sons, will be certified as complete and correct. Several recent purchasers have sent their manuscripts to me for inspection, and I have been sorry not to be able to certify to their correctness. It grieves us to have our Law incorrectly copied. I request my friend, Dr. Barton, to make this statement to intending purchasers. We desire that such copies of our sacred books as go forth into Christian libraries shall be accurate. Any manuscript purchased in our Synagogue, and bearing my seal, is genuine and complete.

JACOB, Son of Aaron, High Priest of the Samaritans.

Samaritan Synagogue, Nâblus, Palestine.

Mount Gerizim, the One True Sanctuary

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JACOB, SON OF AARON

HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS

TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC

BY PROFESSOR ABDULLAH BEN KORI

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MOUNT GERIZIM THE ONE TRUE SANCTUARY.

BY JACOB, SON OF AARON, HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS AT SHECHEM.[1]

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE following remarkable paper is by the present High Priest of the Samaritan religion. It is the living utterance of a sect almost forgotten, and remembered by the world only in connection with its relations, first with the Jews, and afterward with the ministry of Jesus. Through these sources we know that the Samaritans have held throughout the ages a weary and profitless controversy concerning the authorized place of worship. The pilgrim to Jerusalem looses the shoes from off his feet in reverence for that ancient holy place, and casts a curious glance at Gerizim as he rests by Jacob's well, and thinks of it as a shrine established by the excommunicated priest Manasseh and his father-in-law Sanballat in the time of Nehemiah.

Against this judgment on the evidence of one side the High Priest asks to be heard. He claims to be able to show for Gerizim an antiquity far antedating Jerusalem. For the first time in any modern tongue (so far as is known to the editor of this document) he has secured the ear of Christendom, and he asks for an impartial hearing.

It will certainly surprise many readers of this article to find the High Priest so keen a logician. While this article shows much reasoning of the type we have learned to call rabbinical, his argument as a whole is logical, and follows the historical method to a climax.

He claims to set forth, as he has received it from his fathers, the Samaritan priests in unbroken succession from Aaron, the argument for the sanctity of the holy mountain, Gerizim, against what he deems the modern and unsupported claims of the Jebusite city called by the Jews Jerusalem. That city, he affirms, was not the place mentioned in the sacred Torah as the one to which the

[1] Translated from the Arabic by Professor Abdullah Ben Kori, of Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon; edited by Rev. William E. Barton, D.D., Oak Park, Illinois.

children of Israel were journeying, nor was it known to them, nor was it in their possession, nor is it named in the passages in the Scriptures of the Jews which they quote in support of it. The unnamed sanctuary there cannot refer to Jabish, which was not known to the Jews at that time, nor until David captured it, and his wicked son Solomon introduced idolatry of various kinds. He appeals to the Scriptures of the Jews, and affirms that where the place of the sanctuary is unnamed it cannot refer to Jerusalem, and that where it is named it plainly names Gerizim. There the tribes gathered for the ratifying of the Law, and there they continued to come for the crowning of their kings. Even the son of Solomon came back to Gerizim to be crowned, as the Jews themselves know, and their Scriptures declare. How vain, then, is it for them to assert that their city possesses antiquity and sanctity, when their own writings, even with the corruptions they have made in them, show that Gerizim is the place for worship!

I regret that in the article published in the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA for July, 1906, one or two errors appeared in my statements concerning the age and service of Jacob, the High Priest. The information on which I relied for these items was inaccurate in some of its minor details. In a recent letter the priest promises me detailed biographical information, but furnishes these facts concerning his own birth and administration:—

"I was born in the year 1257 of the Mohammedan Era, which is 1841 A. D. My father died the same year I was born, and I was brought up by my grandfather. He was very kind to me, and taught me all I know. I was married at eighteen, and when I was twenty years of age my grandfather put me into the priesthood, in which I have been ever since."

This paper constitutes the second of the ten chapters of the book written by the High Priest, referred to in the previous article.

I do not pretend that the publication of the High Priest's argument will greatly disturb the conclusions of Christian scholarship. To us it matters little on what mountain men were once taught to worship God; since now the true believer may worship the Father everywhere. But if any importance whatever may be attached to the historical inquiry, the High Priest has more to say for his side of the controversy than most modern scholars have suspected.

I acknowledge the ability and courtesy of Professor Ben Kori, whose translation has been a labor of love, and without whose coöperation my own work would have been impossible.

WILLIAM E. BARTON.

THE SANCTITY OF GERIZIM.

IN THE NAME OF THE MOST MERCIFUL GOD. This chapter is concerning the belief of the Samaritan people as regards the direction in which they turn themselves in prayer, namely, toward Mount Gerizim. Their authority is manifest from the express commands of the holy Torah. In it we shall prove that this identical mountain is the chosen site, the house of God—Bait-u-Elah. Upon it the Shekinah was established during the life of our lord Joshua, the son of Nun (upon him be peace and the best of favors); and therefore it should be the place of worship. We shall reply, furthermore, to the Jews, who rejected it, and refute their alleged reasons for substituting another place for it, calling to our proof Scriptures that expressly relate to it.

THE DIVINE REVELATION OF THE TRUE SANCTUARY.

The Samaritan people, in the first place, declare that, as a matter of fact and viewed from a rational standpoint, the best knowledge is to know the Creator (who is exalted above all); and the best action is to worship him (who is exalted); for by both of these every being is ennobled. And, as the result of the diligent inquiry of thinking people, they have been led to the conviction that the Maker of the world is the Ancient One, whose worship shall be binding, and whose unity should be made evident. The spiritual angels left their abode on high and descended earthward upon that sacred spot wherein appeared his worship (who is exalted), and the belief in his oneness. The spot became, on that account, highly exalted, and quite distinct from every other on the whole earth. This distinction and explanation are satisfactory to thinking minds.

THE SANCTUARY FROM MOSES TO JACOB.

The prophets, according to the traditions, from Adam to

our lord Moses (on whom be peace), had, doubtless, a direction toward which they turned themselves in their worship of God (who is exalted and honored). Passages may be found in the sacred Book that was brought down upon our lord Moses (on whom be peace) which harmonize with this claim. In fact, God (who is exalted) revealed the region and place through Moses, as will be explained later on, with the help of God (may he be exalted). But among those passages it will be of use to mention the ones in connection with our lord Jacob (on whom be peace).[1]

THE PROMISE IN THE WILDERNESS.

Again, we note what our lord Moses (on whom be peace) mentioned in the song that was sung by himself and his people, the children of Israel, in connection with the incident of the sea, and which is found in Exodus xv. 17, meaning as follows: "Thou wilt introduce them, and plant them upon the mountain of thy inheritance, in thy place," down to the passage, in the same chapter, whose purport is as follows: "Which thou hast made, O Lord, thy sanctuary. Confirm it, O God, by thy power; thou, O God, who rulest eternally and forever." This prophecy of our lord Moses (on whom be peace) confirms the continuation of the sanctity of that place; for it is connected with the ever existence of God and of his kingdom. Whether by the way of inclusiveness or as a part of the whole, it is God's kingdom; therefore this place is a chosen one.

THERE CAN BE BUT ONE SUCH SANCTUARY.

Moreover, what would be of import to our position is the command of God (who is exalted) to destroy the places upon which the foreigners worshiped their gods, namely, upon

[1] The argument here is omitted as it appears later in place.

the high mountains, in the groves, and under every shady tree. He commanded them to demolish their altars, to undermine their inclosures, to burn in fire their temples, to break to pieces their engraved idols, to blot out their names from those places, adding, "Do not worship otherwise; but only upon the place which the Lord your God chose from among your tribes that his name may abide therein, and he (who is exalted) may dwell upon it." The same is plainly indicated in Deuteronomy xii. 26: "But thy offerings and thy vows, which thou vowest and consecratest to God, carry and bring over to the place which God chose." This place has been already shown, in another chapter, to exist in the land of Canaan, and we shall refer to it later on.

JERUSALEM CANNOT BE THE SANCTUARY.

God preferred this tribe known as the Samaritans to those of the Jews, because of God's approval of the Samaritans over the Jews in reference to the point to which direction in prayer is made. In the manuscript of the Torah which is in the hands of the Samaritans, the reference concerning the point of direction in prayer is indicated in the past tense, namely, "in the place which he chose." The Jews, however, have in all their manuscripts: "in the place which he hath chosen." The Jews claimed the verb to be future, and that the command was fulfilled under Solomon, the son of David, after the passing of two hundred and thirty years of the possession of the land of Canaan by the children of Israel. Then the Jews began to build the city they call Jerusalem, which, in fact, was built by and captured from the Jebusites under the reign of Solomon's father, David, as we have indicated in the first chapter of this book. But what would render this supposition null and void is the making on the part of God (who is exalted) an obligatory

duty upon his people of Israel, during the days of our lord Moses (upon whom be peace) to bring forth a tenth of the fruit of the land and of its crops, and to set apart whatever is vowed of sheep, oxen, and their first-born yearly, and to bring the same before the presence of God to the chosen place, prohibiting their use for sacrifice in the villages and cities. Now it would be wrong to make the tithes binding every year, and to have them used in a special place, while the place is either non-existent or unknown, with no means of finding it out. This certainly cannot be accepted by sane minds; for, necessarily, the place must have been already existent and its whereabouts must have been known before Jerusalem was in the hands of the Jews. What might be an additional proof of the wrong supposition of our opponents, as they claimed, is what God (may he be exalted) made binding in reference to oxen and sheep that are set apart; that is, he prohibited the freedom of using them and of having them kept in the hands of him who would set them apart. He, indeed, specified the period to which their setting apart must take place, which is, in case of the oxen, according as it is recorded, up to the time when the oxen reach the age of usefulness, say, in ploughing the earth, and, then, they cannot remain in the hands of their consecrators; for said God (who is exalted): "Do not plough with the first-born of thy ox." This means that the ox ought to be brought to the house of God (who is exalted) before it reaches its age of usefulness. The period limiting the consecration of the first-born of sheep is before the sheep reach what God (who is exalted) specified in the following: "Do not shear the first-born of thy sheep; but before the Lord thy God thou shalt offer it yearly, in the place the Lord thy God chose for thee."

These arguments prove that there was a place of worship known to the fathers and to which they took their sacrifices; and that before Jerusalem was known. We will now consider the reasons why this people claim that direction in prayer is towards, and the worship of God (who is exalted) is upon, the mountain, which is the mountain of worship for those who devoted themselves to God (who is exalted).

GERIZIM WAS THE HOME OF ABRAHAM.

First, what befell our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) after God (who is exalted) commanded him to depart from his land and native home, and said to him, "Go to the land which I shall reveal unto thee, and wherein I shall make thee a great people, and bless thee." The Lord (who is exalted) tells us that Abraham (upon whom be peace) departed, following his command, and came to the land of Canaan, and journeyed in it till he entered Nâblus, that is to "the meadow of Moreh," which is known scripturally and traditionally to be identical with Nâblus. It is thus definitely located in the book of Genesis (chap. xii.), the contents of which affirm that it is the place in view, where our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) pitched his tent. Here, as he remained for a while and settled down, God (may he be exalted) appeared to him, and conversed with him, and blessed him, and promised to give him, and his seed, that land (see aforementioned chapter). We can easily conjecture from the contents that God commanded our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) to leave his country only in order that he might bring him to that place, and we are certain that this place was the one he had promised to direct him to. A sure indication was the fact that the altar was built upon it, and the altar denotes the direction in prayer, as well as the place of prayer and blessing; for upon Abraham's arrival God (may he be exalted) blessed him, and

made gifts to him, and he through the prophetic spirit felt as if his object would be accomplished in doing pilgrimage to that mountain near by, as it is recorded in the same chapter, where it says, "And he departed from there to the mountain east of Beth-el, and pitched there his tent, Beth-el on the west and Ai on the east, and he built there an altar to God, and invoked the name of God." It becomes plain, therefore, that the mountain by the side of the meadow of Moreh is between the mountain of Gerizim and of Ebal (Deut. xi. 30). These boundaries and other indications make plain to us the location of the plain of Moreh, and also the mountain of Gerizim. Here is the Bethel. Here our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) established the altar of worship, and thereupon he declared the name of God (may he be exalted), in order to inform us that the mountain is chosen for that end. The fact is well known that "Elon Moreh" is the plain of Beha, and Ai is a village east of that plain, and these boundaries are thrice mentioned in the Samaritan Torah,—twice in the Decalogue (once in its first division, and another time in its second division). The Jews, however, dropped it out from the Decalogue. The reason whereof is that the dignity and virtue of Mount Gerizim is well affirmed therein. There remained, nevertheless, in the Jewish scriptures, the boundaries as we have mentioned them in Deuteronomy xi. The Jews struck out the saying of God (who is exalted), "confronting Nâblus"; for the Samaritans says, "By the side of Elon Moreh, which is by the side of Nâblus." But though they have struck out God's saying, "confronting Nâblus," the boundaries that are mentioned in their own text are in favor of our argument. The fame of the mountain of Gerizim and of Ebal is, indeed, great, even in the manuscript of the Jews. The boundaries therein recorded define both sides of the

plain: Gerizim on its right, Ebal on its left; and the meadow of Moreh is at the base of Gerizim, reaching as far as the base of Ebal, and Gilgal is opposite the two mountains, and forms a part of their boundaries. To this the intelligent will readily assent. If there were no distinct difference between these two mountains, their boundaries would not have been marked in so specific a manner: such a distinction and preference for the mountain of Gerizim as against the mountain of Ebal will be noticed in its own place in this chapter.

And what would assure us that Nâblus and its mountain are the place to which God (may he be exalted) directed our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace), directing him "to the land which I shall show thee," is the great distance he had to go. The departure of our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) was from "the Ur of Kashdim [Chaldeans], which is in the land of Khorasan." None can make little of the distance between Khorasan and Nâblus, to which he went. With all that, the holy Torah did not mention any stopping-place or the visiting of any place by our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) while on his distant journey, except his destination, the place of Nâblus, the plain and the mountain confronting it: for they were his sought object, and through them was fulfilled what was promised to our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) of blessings from his Abundance (may he be exalted). Thus it is affirmed that Nâblus is a chosen place, and its mountain is a chosen place; it is the mountain of blessing, as it is so explained, and told according to the plain statement of our lord Moses (upon whom be peace); for its name is given as Beth-el.

GERIZIM IS THE PLACE OF THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

The second argument for affirming that it is the chosen place of worship to God from eternity is that the holy men went to

it, and worshiped God upon it, and made pilgrimage to it, and recognized it well. Most notable is the account given as to the trial of our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) when God (may he be exalted) required the sacrifice of Isaac (upon whom be peace), which is plainly given in Genesis xxii. Therein it is said: "After these words God tried Abraham and spoke to Abraham, and he answered: Behold, here I am. And God said, Take thy son, thy only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac, and go to that land, the Moreh, and offer him as an offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell you."

Our lord Abraham (upon him be peace) obeyed the order given him, and rose up early, and took his son, our lord Isaac (upon him be peace), and took with him wood for the offering, and took a knife with him, and also his servants; and moved in the direction of the place as it is indicated in the chapter mentioned. He saw the place to be very distant, and departed in that direction—to the land of Moreh, after he had gone a distance of three days. Now what is meant by the land of Moreh is where he stopped. It is the land of the plain of Moreh by Nâblus, and this must have been the place where God (may he be exalted) commanded him to go. Then our lord Abraham (upon him be peace) looked out to that mountain from afar, and knew positively it was the mountain of Gerizim; for, on account of its fame and height, one can see it from afar. The distance proves also that: our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace), when the revelation was given him, was living in the Bir of the Sabi (Beer-sheba), and that is the exact distance between that place and Mount Gerizim; for if a man would depart early from the Bir of the Sabi, he would not arrive at that mountain except upon the third day.[1] This is clearly not at all true to the place claimed by the Jews as

[1] On this point, see article "Moriah," by Dr. Driver, in Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible.

that of the sacrifice, for it cannot be seen even at a distance of half a day, not to mention three days. In due time our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) arrived at the mountain, of which he was told, and there he built the altar, that is, the altar which he had built before, meaning, he built it again. It is not said, "He built there *an* altar," as if it were the first time he had done so; but "*the* altar"; for where the letters aleph and lamedh are prefixed to an indefinite noun, these letters make it definite, and connect the altar thus rebuilt with a previous and known history. There God (may he be exalted) redeemed our lord Isaac (upon whom be peace) by a ram which he sent, and which our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) offered in lieu of his son. Thus was fulfilled his prayer, namely: "May God attend to the sheep for offering, my son," which was uttered as a reply to the question of his son concerning the sheep for the offering. Thus God answered his prayer, and looked upon him with his mercy, and redeemed his son for him, and saved him from the edge of the knife. Therefore our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) called the name of that place "GOD-IS-SEEN." This name was given for two reasons: first, because God (may he be exalted) saw Abraham (upon whom be peace) with his mercy, and answered him; secondly, because it is a derivation of that place whose name is the land of Moreh wherein the mountain was situated. The same expression is given in the Torah when it was brought down upon our lord Moses (upon whom be peace); it is: "And Abraham called the name of that place YHWH-Jireh," that is, "GOD-IS-SEEN." The report of this expression was given out by the tongue of our lord Moses (upon whom be peace) when he said: "It is said to-day, In the mountain YHWH shall be seen," for the fame of this mountain was well spread among the children of Israel, during the days of the prophet Moses

(upon whom be peace), to the effect that it is the place of prayer and the kiblah of those who pray.

Those who are friendly descendants of Abraham (upon whom be peace), besides affirming the foregoing, basing their stand upon the infallible revelation, believe the advantages accrued in this mountain exist still for the benefit of the latter generations. This could be used to subvert the Jews claiming that the chosen place was selected by God (may he be exalted) only through David and Solomon, adding in their copy of the Torah that it was a place "to be chosen." We have, therefore, thus produced convincing passages out of the Scriptures, and have proved that the kiblah was chosen from eternity.

GERIZIM IS THE BETH-EL OF JACOB'S VISION.

The third argument can be developed out of the life of our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace). Both the Samaritan and the Jewish copies agree on what was reported in Genesis xxviii. as to his departure to his uncle's, and as to what he met in that place where he tarried the night in dreaming that dream and in seeing those visions. From these incidents the high standing of that place, being the gate of heaven, its distinction from other mountains, the necessity of directing oneself toward it in prayer, and its being the kiblah of the saints are strongly confirmed. We have said something along this line in the first part of this chapter.

The fourth argument is, our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) arrived safely from his journey, which was accomplished by God's providence as is indicated in Genesis xxxi. 13, where God says, "I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst a pillar and didst vow a vow; arise and go to the land of thy nativity." While on the mountain, as he was on his way, he had vowed as follows: "If God will be with me, and

will keep me in this way which I go, and will give me bread as food and clothes to put on, and if I return in peace to the house of my father; God shall be my lord, and this stone that I have set shall be the house of God: and whatever thou shalt give me, that I shall surely tithe for thee." When the Lord (may he be exalted) favored him, and gave him blessings and brought him back in peace, and fulfilled his request, and conferred upon him his favors, he imposed it a duty upon him to fulfill his vows. He reminded him of his pillar and promise, and told him to go to that very place wherein he made his vow, there to fulfill it. Jacob, loaded with abundant favors, obediently left his uncle, and came in the direction of Nâblus, for it was the intended place (see Gen. xxxiii. 18). "And Jacob came safely to Shechem, which is Nâblus, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and he pitched his tent before the city."

Now, the single return of Jacob to the city of Nâblus is the fulfillment of his prayer, which he uttered in the course of his vow, saying, "And if I return safely to the house of my father." Verily, it was the fulfillment of what he wished. By the house of his father is meant the altar his grandfather Abraham (upon whom be peace) had built in the plain at Nâblus, and it is the very one previously mentioned as "Elon Moreh." Therefore our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) pitched his tent in that place. "He pitched his tent before that city." The city is Nâblus. He, also, bought that plain, to which reference has been made, from the people of those days, and which is called "Halkat us-Sahra." The name of the plain was at first "Elon Moreh," but now it is "Halkat us-Sahra." What stronger argument could there be than the fact that our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) bought this plain to the neglect of others; that he erected therein an altar

and called the name of that altar "The Mighty God of Israel"? This parcel of "us-Sahra" belonging to Nâblus is at the base of Mount Gerizim. Both the Samaritan and Jewish people agree upon its name and fame. At its corner our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace) is buried. His tomb is still to be seen in it until this very day. This fact is strongly affirmed by the written traditions of both of the mentioned peoples, so we have exact and undisputed knowledge so far as that place is concerned.

The Samaritan people know their truths through what has been written about it in the books of their forefathers and through their dwelling near by it.

THE BURIAL OF JOSEPH PROVES THE SANCTITY OF GERIZIM.

With the Jews, what affirms our position is the thirty-second verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua, reading as follows: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem, which place was bought for one hundred sheep, and it became a possession of the children of Joseph." But the Samaritan people explain, from the Scriptures and traditions of their forefathers, that the cause of their forefather Jacob's buying this parcel of land was its exalted rank, because our Lord Abraham (upon whom be peace) erected upon it an altar, and because of its nearness to Mount Gerizim. The burial of our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace) is in that very place. This has been our contention throughout the long discussion with the aforesaid people. Apparently the burial of Joseph (upon whom be peace) was the result of a special revelation from God (may he be exalted) to our lord Joshua (upon whom be peace), for it was among those sections of Nâblus given to our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace) by his father Jacob (upon

whom be peace). This is explained in Genesis xlviii. 21: "And I gave thee Nâblus [Sam. Heb. reads Shechem] in preference to thy brothers, which I took from the band of the Amorite with my sword and bow."

This passage, taken from the Hebrew text, harmonizes with the passage found in the Samaritan text, and also with the text used by the Jews. Accordingly the lord Joshua (upon whom be peace) and the people with him, who found favor in God's sight, gave Nâblus and its dependencies to the children of Joseph (upon whom be peace), wherein they buried their grandfather.

We do not admit the claim of the Jews, to the effect that Nâblus was one of the cities of Refuge, as is found in their book of Joshua. Now, the cities of Refuge belonged to the children of Levi: observe, therefore, this contradiction. Joseph (upon whom be peace) was buried in his own portion, as it is admitted by both Samaritans and Jews and as we explained previously, and not in land belonging to the Levites (upon whom be peace).

The reason why our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) gave particularly Nâblus to our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace) in preference to his brothers can be found in Jacob's desire to recompense his son's beneficent deeds and favors which the latter accorded to his father and brothers in supplying with abundance their deficiencies and needs in those years of famine, as the report is given in Genesis xlvii. 12, where we find the following: "And Joseph nourished his father, brothers, and all his father's family, with bread, according to their families."

He used to feed them, and give them bread, to each in sufficient quantity, including even their children. There was no bread in all the land, for famine was felt sorely. There-

fore Jacob (upon whom be peace) gave the noblest of the earth's spots especially to him. And God (may he be exalted) made it a duty upon any of the children of Israel who was to take possession of his own inheritance, wherever it might be, to come to this spot, in order to be sanctified by treading on it, and in order to receive a blessing from it, and thence to carry such a blessing to his own land. And notice of this is given in the book of Deut. xxxiii. 13, in the blessing recorded by our lord Moses (upon whom be peace) concerning our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace): "And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land for the precious things of heaven." This is the land which was given to him and wherein he was buried; it is the blessed land from God (may he be exalted). Blessed shall be those who make pilgrimage to it, and those who dwell upon it: this passage confirms the fact that Nâblus and its mountain are chosen by God (may he be glorified). He sanctified them, and blessed them, and made them a worthy site for his worship, and for the fulfilling of vows therein.

GERIZIM WAS THE PLACE TO WHICH JACOB "WENT UP" TO WORSHIP.

The fifth argument can be drawn from the following: That the Scriptures declare the place called Beth-el to be the chosen site and identified with Mount Gerizim is plain from the account of what took place between our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) and Shekim the son of Hemor, who was the governor of Nâblus in those days, in regard to the latter's marriage with Jacob's daughter Dinah. When Jacob's sons killed the inhabitants of Nâblus, our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) became afraid of the consequences of their action, and the Creator (may he be exalted) knew of his fear and revealed to him his will as follows: "Arise, and go up to Beth-el, and remain

there; and erect an altar to the Omnipotent, who appeared to thee in thy flight from before thy brother Esau." Our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) was at that time living in the land-parcel which he bought from the Amorites, which is Elon Moreh, which is close by Mount Gerizim, as we have explained previously. Now when God (may he be exalted) said to Jacob (upon whom be peace): "Go up," he meant that he who desires to go up to Mount Gerizim from this land-parcel, his doing so is a continuous going up from the beginning of his march until his arrival. Furthermore it is explained that this place, upon which Jacob (upon whom be peace) was commanded to go, was the very place where he tarried the night in his flight from his brother Esau. It was there that the angel appeared to him. He called that place Beth-el, and erected a pillar upon it. In the account (to which reference has been made) Jacob (upon whom be peace) is commanded to erect another altar on it, in order that the timid may be well assured that such a place is his refuge, for it is the house of God, the protector, (may he be exalted) who saves the one taking refuge in him and seeking him by faith, in this place. Our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) obeyed, and performed, as the Holy Spirit told him, what is dutiful to everyone intending to make a pilgrimage to this place. It was what had been performed, also, by his forefathers. He ordered his children to put away from among them the foreign gods, which they had stolen from the worship houses of the people of Nâblus. He ordered them to purify themselves, and to change their clothes, as is given in Genesis xxxv. 6. Thereupon he commanded them to go up to Luzah, to Beth-el, as it is said in the same chapter: "So Jacob came to Luzah, which is in Canaan (the same is Beth-el), he and all the people that were with him." These passages indicate that the place is one, and there is

no other included. It belongs to God, and it was not substituted. It was called, formerly, Luzah, but now it is called Beth-el. How could there be doubt of its being the chosen place, when its former name "Lu-zah" means "to God" and its following name "Beth-el" means "the house of the Almighty"? It was, moreover, called "Beth-Elohim," meaning "the house of angels"; also "Sheer-hashamaim," meaning "the gates of heavens." The name "Gerizim" appeared for the first time only during the life of our lord Moses (upon whom be peace). He who knows Hebrew and has it at his command can hardly fail to see strong proofs and plain indications in these names, as they are pronounced in Hebrew, and it takes little consideration of these legal and Mosaic passages to come to the sure conclusion that they designate Mount Gerizim or Beth-el, meaning "the house of God"; that it is the kiblah for the worship of God (who is exalted) and the proper site for his descending glory; that it is the place designated by the apostle Moses (upon whom be peace) in Exodus xv. 4, while he was praying to God that the people of Israel might remain firm in this mountain, as follows: "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. Thou, O Lord, shalt reign forever and ever." From these passages it appears that the place in question is holy, and that its holiness is subject to no change with God (who is exalted).

GERIZIM IS THE MOUNTAIN WHERE JOSHUA SET UP THE PILLAR.

The sixth argument we can have from what is related in the book of Joshua, the one which is in the possession of the Samaritans and according to the one in the possession of the

Jews, that the aforesaid mountain is sanctified to God. The Jewish book called Joshua, in chap. xxiv. 25, says: "And Joshua made a covenant in that day; he set thereon a statute and an ordinance in Nâblus, and wrote all these sayings in the law of God, and he took a large stone, and set under the Hailah, the oak, that was in the sanctuary of God." This "Hailah" is the one under which our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) buried the spoils his children took from Nâblus, when he came up to this mountain, as it is seen in Genesis xxxv. 4: "And they gave unto Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hand, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." Thus it is clear from this and other passages that the sanctuary of God was in Nâblus, and that it is the place wherein existed "Hailah," whose fame is great with the Samaritans until this day. Even the Muslims who live near by or in Nâblus receive blessings from it, and, following the manner of the children of Israel, call it "The Pillar," deriving this name from the pillar which our lord Joshua (upon whom be peace) set, and whereupon he wrote the covenant which he made with the children of Israel just before his death, as previously mentioned.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT REQUIRES WORSHIP IN GERIZIM.

The seventh argument is that in the Samaritan Torah, in the Decalogue, in the tenth commandment, there is the following: "And it shall be that when God shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanite, which thou shalt enter to inherit it; there shalt thou set up large stones, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster, and thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law. And when ye shall cross the Jordan, ye shall set up these stones, as I am commanding you, in Mount Gerizim.

And ye shall build there an altar for the Lord your God, and thou shalt offer thereupon offerings for the Lord your God; and this mountain is beyond Jordan, towards where the sun sets, in the land of the Canaanite, who dwells in the Arabah opposite Gilgal, beside Elon Moreh, in front of Nâblus."

This commandment of the Decalogue was omitted by the Jews in their copy: if they would investigate, they would find their Decalogue to be formed of nine commandments. But this commandment was repeated again before the death of our lord the Apostle Moses (upon whom be peace). He made a covenant with them and reminded them of this commandment still found in Deuteronomy xvii. in the copies of both Samaritans and Jews: "And Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments I commanded you this day. And when ye shall cross the Jordan to the land the Lord God shall grant thee, then set thee up large stones, and plaster them with plaster, and write upon them all the words of the law. When thou shalt cross into the land the Lord your God shall give you, a land that produces milk and honey, as said the Lord, the God of your fathers when ye shall cross over, ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day."

Now in the Samaritan Torah the stones are ordered to be set up "in Mount Gerizim"; while the Jews have "in Mount Ebal." It continues: "And thou shalt plaster them with plaster, and thou shalt erect an altar to the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt not lift upon them any iron. Of whole stones shalt thou build the altar of the Lord thy God, and thou shalt offer upon it burnt offerings to the Lord thy God, and thou shalt offer peace sacrifices. Thou shalt eat there and rejoice before the Lord thy God." He repeated the

same thought again in this chapter, and made it a duty to have the blessing recited from upon Mount Gerizim, because of the descent of the blessing in this mountain upon the children of Israel. Therefore he said: "These should stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people." They were Simon, Levi, Juda, Iesheker, Joseph, and Benjamin; opposite them, according to the command of God (who is exalted), stood six others, upon Mount Ebal, as it is said: "And these should stand upon Mount Ebal to curse." They were Reuben, Gad, Esher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. Following these passages, this change made by the Jews becomes plain; they claim the altar was to be built on Mount Ebal, whereas God (who is exalted) made known to us, through the preceding passages, the exalted difference of Mount Gerizim from Mount Ebal. He told us what to do: to rejoice in that place, where he commanded an altar to be erected thereupon to offer sacrifices and to do other specified things; but joy cannot take place in Mount Ebal, on account of what he commanded to be done upon it, namely, to curse and threaten, which, rather, causes repentance and weeping. Sadness would take hold of the feelings, and if those curses and threatenings were heard one would necessarily weep and repent. All this opposes Joy. But the blessings and promises are heard together with other concomitant expressions, namely, blessing God's name; then joy would result. Gladness will possess the feelings; for blessings contain promises of the abundance of wealth, descent of blessing, assurance of victory, and fulfillment of covenant. Prayer must be applied to receive them. God (who is exalted) made us know, from the Scriptures, that to give and receive blessing must be accompanied with "His name" (who is exalted). Thus he said to the children of Aaron, who were ordered to bless continually the people of God, Israel, as in Numbers vi.

22: "And God spake to Aaron and his sons, saying: Thus ye shall bless the children of Israel" as far as "And they shall place my name upon the children of Israel and I shall bless them." It is proved, therefore, that blessing must be joined with God's name; that God (may he be exalted) established a place wherein it is good to hear it; that the latter can be obtained upon Mount Gerizim. Thus it is written in Deut. xi. 29: "And thou shalt perform the blessings upon Mount Gerizim and the cursings upon Mount Ebal." Hence to ask for the blessings and to obtain them must occur only upon this mountain upon which God (may he be exalted) made it imperative to have thanksgiving, sacrificial offerings, and rejoicing, associated with hearing the blessings, as they take place upon Mount Gerizim. The Jews, however, still keep with no alteration the two previously recorded commands in regard to Mount Gerizim, namely: "Thou shalt give the blessings upon Mount Gerizim" and also: "Those shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people." But in connection with the altar, sacrificial offerings, and rejoicing, they change Gerizim to Ebal and, thereby, unite two impossibilities, namely, of having cursing and rejoicing take place jointly, as we have already said. But, at any rate, the erection of an altar as well as the offering of sacrifices and rejoicing must take place in a sacred place, well fitted for that end; for such must be done "before God." It must be attended to as soon as possession of the land shall become a fact. God made it imperative that it should take place only in the site chosen as his kiblah, as several passages of the Scriptures testify to it. He connected the offering of sacrifices with the tabernacle: whosoever offered sacrifices outside of the tabernacle was caused to perish. He (who is exalted) commanded that the tabernacle should be erected in the appointed place; he made both the tabernacle

and the place eternally indissoluble the one from the other.

As for the conditions of sacrificial offerings before the presence of God, that is, in the kiblah of God, they are found in Leviticus, in several chapters, among which is the seventeenth. Let the reader look this up, and its contents will be found clear. As to the indissoluble connection of the tabernacle with its appointed site, we find several chapters that refer to it, among which is Deuteronomy xxi. In this chapter God (may he be exalted) set and designated the appointed place; what must be done upon it; the sacrificial offerings and the rejoicing. From it, it is clear that rejoicing should be done in the tabernacle in the appointed place, and that assures us that the appointed place is Mount Gerizim, which is by Nâblus. As to whether it is Mount Gerizim (according to the Samaritans) or Ebal (according to the Jews) in connection with the erection of an altar, the offerings and rejoicing, taking place "before God," that question has been answered. The law must be read after the passing of the "seven years." The reading must be done in the hearing of all the children of Israel (see Deut. iii. 9–12). Also the passover offering must be done in connection with "the appointed place," and not in the temple house, as the Jews claim, and in no other place. The necessary pilgrimages are three every year. Such pilgrimages, according to God's command, must be rendered in his presence, in his appointed place. It is found in Joshua that our lord Joshua (upon whom be peace) left undone not even a word of the Law, but he executed it. The land rested in his days. (See Josh. xi. 15; viii. 35.) At the close of the latter chapter we read: "He did not neglect even one word of what Moses commanded; he executed everything."

GERIZIM IS THE MOUNT OF BLESSING.

The eighth argument, which also confirms the fact that

Mount Gerizim is the appointed place, is that it was the mountain upon which the blessings were recited. Now I will draw the contrast between the exalted estate of Mount Gerizim and that of Mount Ebal, in addition to what preceded.

1. We note the appointment of the first six tribes to stand on Mount Gerizim for blessing; while the other six tribes, all lower in nobility, were designated to stand on Mount Ebal. The tribes upon Ebal were, with the exception of two, the children of concubines. As to Reuben and Zebulun, there is discussion that, for time and space, we shall let go by in this short essay.

2. The necessity of giving the blessings on Mount Gerizim and the cursings on Mount Ebal.

3. When the two mountains are named, Gerizim is always mentioned first.

4. The very appearance of the two mountains suggests a contrast, and discloses the existence of traces of blessings on Mount Gerizim. It is a shining mountain. It is crowned with water springs gushing from all its sides. It has a full vegetation and a healthy climate. Mount Ebal has nothing of the kind as we can see to-day.

5. The fact that it is called "Beth-el," and that Elon Moreh is by its side. The latter is also called "Halkat us-Sahra." No explanation is needed here for the one who looks upon and reads the books of Moses (upon whom be peace). From every standpoint Mount Gerizim towers over Ebal, and is in every possible way superior to it in all points of excellency.

6. There is in the Samaritan Torah the passage that the erection of the altar and the offering of sacrifices should take place on Gerizim. This is the true reading. Contrary to what the Jews affirm, corrupting the very Torah to prove their

position, changing the one true place of worship, first to Shiloh and afterward to Jebesh, and causing their Law to read that the holy altar was erected on Ebal the mountain of cursing, the Samaritans preserve and obey the word as it was revealed through Moses (upon whom be peace).

7. The Jews forgot Nâblus and its exalted state, in spite of the fact that in the days of Samuel and Saul, as it is evident from their own books of Kings and Chronicles, they used never to declare allegiance to a monarch or crown a king except in Shechem or Nâblus; for it was the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, and in the lot of our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace), who is the first king that appeared out of the descendants of our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace).[1]

THE TWICE SEVEN HOLY NAMES OF MOUNT GERIZIM.

The Samaritan books have for Mount Gerizim twice seven holy names.

1. The first name is "THE ANCIENT MOUNTAIN." The Ancient One (may he be exalted) chose it from the creation, from the time he made the dry land to appear. It is so designated in Deut. xxiii. 15, where in the blessing of Joseph (upon whom be peace) it is stated that his blessing shall be from the excellencies of "the ancient mountain."

2. It is called BETH-EL, meaning "THE HOUSE OF THE ALMIGHTY." The Almighty (may he be exalted) caused it to be a shield and a help to the one making pilgrimage to it. He made it a refuge and sanctuary to all those who turn to God (may he be exalted) and seek him upon it. This name was mentioned several times in Jacob's flight for his fear of those of Nâblus, that is, those who live in or by it. God (may he be exalted) told him, "Arise, and go up to Beth-el."

[1] See, e. g., the account of the coronation of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon (1 Kings xii. 1).

A full discussion of the same has already been made in this chapter, and God (may he be exalted) knows best.

3. The third name is "THE HOUSE OF ANGELS" (Elohim). It is the dwelling of the holy angels. They never abandon it; they continually remain in it, praising God (may he be exalted) and praying to him on it. Our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) uttered this name when he said: "This is no other than the house of God" (Gen. xxviii. 17).

4. The fourth name is "THE GATE OF HEAVEN." Everyone who prays and seeks God (may he be exalted) in prayer, must direct himself to it. To prove it, see what our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) said in the same chapter, namely, "And this is the gate of heaven."

5. The fifth name is LUZAH. It is declared in the same chapter that the name of the city was, at first, Luzah. That was its surname from the beginning; for in the first ages they used to designate this mountain, saying, "To him is this [Lozeh], that is, "TO GOD IS THIS PLACE." This was because of what they used to see of its greatness and lights, and this was the reason why our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) said about this mountain: "How full of lights is this place" (see preceding chapter).

6. The sixth name is "SANCTUARY." It is spoken of as the dwelling of the Holy One (may he be exalted), and it is the place of the sanctuary and the kiblah of the sanctiful people. All these words fit it closely. It is the place of God (may he be exalted). Therefore spoke the great prophet Moses (upon whom be peace) in the holy Torah, in designating this mountain: "Thou hast made a *sanctuary,* O Lord."

7. The seventh name is "MOUNT GERIZIM." It is explained after the Scriptures as the mountain of blessing: "Thou shalt make *the blessing upon Mount Gerizim.*" It is, also,

hinted at as the dwelling of God (may he be exalted) whereupon the name of God (may he be exalted) must be uttered. Compare "In the place where my name is pronounced, there I shall be, and I shall bless thee."

8. The eighth name is "BETH-YHWH." This is the very name of the Highest. Compare Exodus xxiii. 19: "The firstlings of thy land shalt thou bring to the house of the Lord [Beth-YHWH] thy God." It is the place of offerings of tithes, firstlings, sacrifices and presents, and of everything that belongs to God (may he be exalted), according to his command. And as there is no companion to the Owner of the name YHWH, so there is among all the mountains none like this mountain.

9. The ninth name is "THE BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAIN." Compare Deut. iii. 25, where our lord Moses (upon whom be peace) designated so in his prayer that he may enter the holy land in order to see the beautiful mountain: "Let me go beyond to the good land, which is across the Jordan, that beautiful mountain and Lebanon." He meant by "that beautiful mountain" Mount Gerizim; he was praying in its direction as he called it so. The reason of thus surnaming it is found in the fact that God (may he be exalted) had commanded that everything good should be offered upon it, beginning from Abel (see Gen. iv. 4): "And Abel offered, also, of the firstlings of his sheep and of its fat ones." This mountain offering corresponds with the written traditions kept by this people. God (may he be exalted) commanded it, namely, that everything good and holy should be offered him upon this mountain. We find the following in Deuteronomy xii. 11: "To the place which the Lord your God shall choose from your tribes to cause his name to dwell there, ye shall bring thither what I am

commanding you" as far as "and the best of the vows ye vow to God."

10. The tenth name is "THE CHOSEN PLACE," as in verse 5 of the same chapter, and in many other passages.

11. The eleventh name is "THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD." So called it our two great lords, our lord Jacob and our lord Moses (upon them be peace), in the blessing they gave Joseph (upon whom be peace). The words of our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace) are as follows: He said in the blessing, "The blessing of thy father and of thy mother have prevailed upon the blessing of the mountains." Again, "Even to the bound of the highest in the world" shall be to the chief Joseph (upon whom be peace). Our lord Moses (upon whom be peace) spoke in blessing Joseph (upon whom be peace) as follows: "From the best things of the *ancient mountain* and the best things of the highest in the world." He meant that this mountain is the highest of the earth's mountains in point of excellency and altitude.

12. The twelfth name is "THE FIRST OF MOUNTAINS," situated within the boundaries of the best of the tribes. Compare what God (may he be exalted) said about it to our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace): "Upon the best, or first, of mountains, which I will tell you." This was when God (may he be exalted) was trying his allegiance by commanding him to offer his son Isaac (upon whom be peace), as in Genesis xxii. 2: "Take thy son, thy only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac, and bring him to the land of Moreh and offer him as an offering upon the first of mountains, which I will tell you."

13. The thirteenth name is "GOD IS SEEN." It was given by our lords Abraham and Moses (upon them be peace). Compare Genesis xxii. 14.

14. The fourteenth name is "THE MOUNTAIN OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE SHEKINAH," for our lord Moses(upon whom be peace) said: "In the mountain of thy inheritance, the place of thy dwelling," as we have previously explained in this chapter.

Both the Samaritan and Jewish copies agree that our lord Joshua (upon whom be peace), before his death, gathered all Israel, and they stood in the presence of God in the tabernacle, as we read in the Jewish book of Joshua (chapter xxiv.).

He made there a covenant with them that should remain faithful to the keeping of the law, given through our lord Moses, the son of Amram (upon whom be peace). Just after that it is said, "And he made them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem," the city now known as Nâblus. That was immediately before his death.

To prove what we have said, let it be known that Nâblus was the capital of the kingdom of Israel, and one of its mountains was Mount Gerizim, whereupon, during the life of our lord Joshua (upon whom be peace), the tabernacle was erected. Another proof is that all those who served in the tabernacle, namely, Eleazer, Phinehas, Ithamar, Shisha, Bahka, and Uzza and the seventy elders, who prophesied from the gift of our lord Moses (upon whom be peace), all of these were ordered to be buried opposite the aforesaid mountain, and so it was done. They were buried opposite the noble mountain in Amarta, after they had spent their age in serving in the tabernacle. Their graves are still known to both Samaritans and Jews unto this day. If, according to the fancy of the Jews, the tabernacle had been in Jebesh, these great priests would have been buried there. One sees their graves—all directed towards this mountain.

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Thus do the Samaritans prove their sanctuary the true place of prayer, appealing not to their own traditions only, but to the testimony of priests whom the Jews also honor, whose graves, now with us and undisputed, bear their own eloquent testimony to the truth which we profess; for those graves point, as we pray, toward the Holy Mountain, where we still worship the God of our fathers.

Let me conclude this chapter by saying: This is the creed of the Samaritans and their belief in this mountain. They offer their sacrifices upon it, and perform upon it all that is necessary for their sanctification, in accordance with Deut. xxxiii. 18–19. They argue that the prophet-leader, who shall lead the world, will surely appear. He will bring up again the Shekinah upon the aforesaid mountain, in the second kingdom, when God shall look with favor upon his people and shall forgive them.

O God, direct us to thy pleasure, and confirm us in the best faith through the intermediation of our lord and prophet Moses, the son of Amram!

This chapter is what a tired mind and a weak intelligence could attain within the limits of briefness.

And God knows best.

Jacob, Son of Aaron, High Priest of the Samaritans at Shechem.